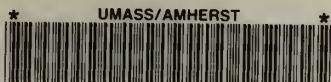


MASS. Y3.LP1: B41



312066 0285 3071 4

BELCHERTOWN

Farmland Preservation Plan

FEB 17 1989

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
Depository Copy



PIONEER VALLEY
PLANNING COMMISSION

September, 1987

BELCHERTOWN FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

Prepared by Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

in cooperation with

the Belchertown Farmland Preservation Committee

July, 1987

This report was prepared under the direction of Timothy Brennan,
Executive Director.

Staff Credits:

Writing and Research: Christopher Curtis
Laurie Boosahda

Graphics: Shaun Hayes

Typing: Flo Eades
Mary Jo Guy

This project was financed in part through a grant
from the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture

BELCHERTOWN FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

Contents

Section I. - Introduction

Section II - The Importance of Farmlands

Section III - Planning Process

Section IV - Farmland Resources in Belchertown

Section V. - Farm Issues and Farmer Attitudes in Belchertown

Section VI. - Options for Farmland Preservation

Section VII - Recommended Strategy for Belchertown

Section VIII Appendices

Appendix A - Farm Matrix

Appendix B - Agricultural Incentive Area Petition

Appendix C - Agricultural Preservation Zoning Bylaw

Appendix D - Newspaper Articles

INTRODUCTION

Background

Over the past several decades, the State of Massachusetts has been losing its agricultural lands at an alarming rate. In 1944, there were over two million acres of farmland in the Commonwealth - about 400,000 acres exist today.

This trend is cause for concern. Pioneer Valley farmlands provide a fresh, high quality food supply for the region, contributing to local economies providing jobs and fostering self sufficiency. They enhance environmental quality by maintaining water supplies through ground-water recharge, providing wildlife habitat, protecting floodplains and wetlands. Farmlands also define and enhance this region's cultural and aesthetic character. Obviously then, if agriculture succumbs to development pressures and financial obstacles, a valuable resource will have been lost and the quality of life in the Pioneer Valley will be forever changed.

Project Objectives

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission initiated the Farmland Preservation and Revitalization Program in order to search for creative solutions to the problem of the loss of prime farmlands. Its mission is to help communities design and implement strategies which will protect and preserve prime agricultural land, while allowing for balanced residential and commercial growth.

Over the past year, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission has worked with farmland committees in three communities - Amherst, Belchertown and Southampton - in a pilot farmland preservation program. Financial assistance to carry out the program has been provided by the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, the towns and the PVPC.

The local farmland preservation committees have worked hard, with a strong commitment to community participation, to design a farmland preservation strategy which would:

- effectively preserve prime farmlands
- help improve the viability of farm operations
- be supported by the local farm community
- be a workable, cost-effective local solution.

While each community's specific needs and goals will vary, the overall intent of this project has been to design a creative and effective set of local farmland preservation tools which can be used by communities across the Pioneer Valley and throughout Massachusetts.

Section II

IMPORTANCE OF FARMLANDS

What purposes do farmlands serve? Will there be adverse consequences if we continue to allow our farmlands to be consumed by indiscriminant development? The answers to these questions form the foundation for any farmland preservation effort.

The importance of farmlands in the Connecticut Valley is far-reaching, affecting many aspects of our lives - whether we are aware of it or not. They influence the quality of our lives in a positive way by providing a myriad of economic, cultural, aesthetic and environmental benefits, and by contributing to regional self-sufficiency.

Economic Benefits

The most recent state agricultural census (1982) reveals that annual farm sales for Hampshire County's 559 farms totalled over \$25 million and that these farms reinvest nearly \$23 million of this income for equipment, labor, and other expenses. These figures indicate that the average farm might be expected to contribute over \$40,000 per year to the region's economy. The most important farm types, based upon market value of sales, in Hampshire County were (in descending order): dairy, poultry, nursery and greenhouse, vegetables, cattle and calves, fruit, tobacco, hay and silage, grain, hogs and pigs.

Farms also provide local jobs. Hampshire County farm operations employed over 2,000 people in 1982 at a payroll of nearly \$3.5 million. A recent study by the Western Massachusetts Economic Development Conference concludes that "agriculture in Western Massachusetts is an important and viable sector in the region's economy" (WMEDC, 1987).

Historic/Scenic Benefits

Farmlands and farms also help define our cultural identity. This is particularly true in the Pioneer Valley where farming has shaped history, settlement and landscape perhaps as strongly as any other force. Surely this heritage is worthy of preservation if only for educational purposes. However, farms are also largely responsible for the celebrated scenic qualities of the valley. Our pastoral landscape not only provides area residents with open space and aesthetic relief but also contributes to the region's appeal for tourists and sight seers.

Environmental Benefits

Farmlands provide a variety of environmental functions from which we all benefit. The versatility of farmlands is a tremendous asset; for example, "a hayfield is at once a food factory, a solar energy converter, a wildlife habitat, a flood control structure, and a scenic vista" (Planning, November, 1986). They enhance environmental quality by maintaining water supplies

through groundwater recharge. Finally, unlike urban areas, they are part of, and contribute to, the natural systems which sustain life on our planet. This point is dramatically illustrated in the following quote from Design With Nature by Ian MacHarg:

"Consider a very large bell jar, some miles in diameter. Place it over an area of farmland. The consequences will be very small; the plants produce oxygen for the system and utilize carbon dioxide which they respire, and which is also obtained from decomposition. The numbers of animals and men in the system affect it little, nor does it limit them. Place the same bell jar over a city. If no gases can pass through the bell jar, then the inhabitants will shortly consume all of the oxygen and will asphyxiate. If they cannot dispose of human wastes, they will be encompassed in ordure. If they cannot provide food internally or import it, they will starve."

Benefits to Urban Areas

The case can also be made that preserving farmland is important in preserving the quality of our cities. James Krohe states that "while it remains as true as ever that cities destroy farmland - it is also true that a countryside filled with open land and willing sellers is destructive of cities" (Planning, November, 1986). Sprawling suburbs, office parks and shopping malls are major factors in sucking the life blood from existing downtowns and neighborhoods.

Food Supply

Today, Massachusetts supplies only 15% of its food needs, as opposed to 50% forty years ago. The costs of transporting the remaining 85% of our food is reflected in the fact that Massachusetts residents have food bills up o 10% greater than residents in other parts of the country. In addition, the state is particularly vulnerable to any disruptions in supply that may occur (due to trucking strikes, etc.) as we have a reserve food supply of only seven days. Further, farmland losses can only exacerbate these problems. In order to maintain and promote regional self-sufficiency and in order to ensure the local availability of fresh high quality food, our remaining farms must be preserved.

Preserving farmland in the valley makes sense for everyone.

Section III

PLANNING PROCESS

The work program of the Belchertown Farmland Preservation project was designed to achieve a progression from the initial collection of data on farmlands to the implementation of preservation measures that would reflect the desires of the community as well as the particular characteristics of its agricultural resources.

Establishment of Local Advisory Committee

The first step in the initiation of this program was the establishment of a local advisory committee comprised of farmers, town officials and interested residents, to act as a "board of directors" to guide and assist the PVPC throughout all phases of the project. In Belchertown, initial attempts were made to involve the entire agricultural community in this process resulting in



a mailing list of 60-70 persons. This unwieldy process proved to be unworkable in practice. As a result, a smaller working group evolved which included the following persons:

Belchertown Farmland Preservation Committee

Skip and Janet Minney, Farmers
 Ira Shattuck, Farmer
 Kathy Ruhf, Conservation Commission
 Joanne Newman, Board of Selectmen
 Jim Mazik, Town Planner
 Judi Shattuck, Farmer

In cooperation with this working group, PVPC collected detailed data on Belchertown's farmland resources and conducted an attitudinal survey of the Town's farmers. Subsequent evaluation of this information would guide the committee in the development of preservation strategies.

Analysis and Mapping of Farmland Resources

As an initial step in the collection of existing farm resources, all farm parcels of five acres or more were delineated on a 1"=1000' scale base map of Belchertown. Sources of information for this map included the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture (MDFA), PVPC field surveys, the Belchertown Farmland Preservation Committee, and the Town Assessor's office. Areas of prime farmland soils and soils of state and local significance (as determined by the Soil Conservation Service) were superimposed on the farm parcels by means of an overlay mapping technique. Again, using MDFA information as a starting point to be supplemented by field surveys, map analysis, air photo interpretation and local knowledge, various characteristics of individual farmers were compiled and recorded on a "weighted" matrix. Qualities addressed by this matrix included: farm type, acreage, percentage of prime soils, percentage of soils of state and local significance, and collateral environmental objectives to be served on site. Numerical weights were allotted to each category by the Farmland Committee based on perceptions of importance. This weighted matrix was intended to serve as an aid for determining the relative importance of farm parcels. Each listing received a priority ranking based on its total score. It is important to note that a lower ranking does not mean that a parcel is not worthy of protection, only that its protection is less crucial than higher priority parcels. The Belchertown Farmland Matrix is contained in Appendix A.

The prioritization of farm parcels enables the identification of groups of farms in certain areas of town that may be considered primary "target areas" for some of the preservation techniques discussed in the later chapters of this report. Potential target areas consisting of clusters of high priority, viable farmlands were revealed in the production of a color-coded priority rankings map of farm parcels.

Assessment of Factors Threatening Farmland

With a solid data base on Belchertown's existing agricultural resources in place, attention was then focused on gathering information on the trends and activities which threaten their continued viability so that this, too, could

be factored into the preservation strategy equation. These threats to farms and farmland fall into several categories: development pressures on the land, economic pressures on the farm as a business, and operational difficulties. In order to gain accurate information on these issues, a detailed survey of Belchertown's farmers was undertaken. The survey was administered to 39 Belchertown farmers through personal or telephone interviews conducted by members of the Belchertown Farmland Committee and PVPC staff. Survey results are described in detail later in this report.

Development of Recommended Farmland Preservation Strategy

The extensive base of data discussed above provided a solid foundation for the following phases of the planning process: the development of viable options for farmland protection in Belchertown, the discussion of these options with the Farmland Preservation Committee and Belchertown farmers, and the selection and implementation of these strategies. Each of these steps is covered in detail in subsequent chapters of this report.

Section IV

FARMLAND RESOURCES IN BELCHERTOWN

Belchertown Farming History

First known as the "Equivalent Lands" after a dispute over boundary lines with Connecticut, Belchertown is the largest town in area in the county. A local watering hole on the "highway of travel" between Northampton and Boston gave the community the title "Cold Spring". Northampton cattle browsed in the area in the 1720's, and after regulations controlling the cutting of Northampton timber, Belchertown's pines were valued for candlewood and turpentine. The town was incorporated in 1761 by homesteaders from Northampton, Hatfield and Hadley and named for Jonathan Belcher, Governor of the province of Massachusetts from 1730 - 1740 (Holland).

Belchertown's countryside drew summer residents in the 1880's, and small industries like Bond Grist Mill, Haskell's Cider and Vinegar Works, the Belchertown Woolen Co., and Hawkes, Smith and Company's Carriage Shop were operating along Jabish Brook. However, the 1887 town census shows farming as the principal pursuit of the community whose population had reached 2,400.

In 1871, Deacon Lyman Sabin's farm was awarded first premium for the "best managed farm" in the county by the East Hampshire Agricultural Society. He had bought the land for \$2,000 in 1813, and in 1878, its assessed value was \$6,500. He is quoted as saying, "New England farming may be made profitable even in hilltowns", and he made charitable contributions "in the hope of counteracting the tendency of young men to leave the farms" (Gay's Gazeteer of Hampshire County).

From 1922-72, a large farm was operated by the Belchertown State School. Their dairy cattle had a high reputation; production was over 7,000 pounds of milk in 1967. It also boasted the largest state ratio of eggs per hen, at 248 eggs/hen in 1966. In 1971, the farm produced between \$7,000 and \$11,000 of food, mainly for the institution. After the farm's closing, the land was rented by the University of Massachusetts until 1978 when the New England Small Farm Institute was founded under the Department of Agriculture. Its programs include the Jepson Hall Fruition Park; a 2.5 acre demonstration of low-maintenance, food-bearing trees and shrubs; and, White Oak Apprenticeship Farm, established to provide training for new-entry, small farmers to "utilize techniques and technologies which are energy conserving, maximize soil organic matter, and are environmentally sound". Its aim is to secure a pool of reliable growers to meet the increasing demand for organic produce (NESFI, 1987).

Trends in Agriculture and Land Use

Belchertown's agricultural land acreage decreased 28% from 1952 to 1972 according to the Massachusetts Map Down (MacConnell, 1974). While tilled land remained relatively consistent, pasture land acreage was cut in half and orchards declined even more significantly. At the same time, population increased 24% from 4487 in 1950 to 5936 in 1970. A more dramatic increase of 60% occurred between 1970 and 1987, when population jumped to approximately 9500 (Belchertown Street Listing). The number of housing units in Belchertown

nearly doubled from 1970 (1583 units) to 1980 (2961 units). Since 1980, there has been a 42% increase in housing units with about 1240 new units constructed. In 1986 alone, building permits were issued for 205 units of housing.

AGRICULTURAL LAND TRENDS IN BELCHERTOWN 1952-1972

	1952	1972
Tilled	2412	2482
Pasture	3220	1635
Abandoned fields	1988	1495
Orchards	536	211
Abandoned orchards	--	44
TOTAL	8156	5867

Source: Remote Sensing 20 Years of Change in Hampshire County (Mass. Map Down)

Belchertown, like most of Massachusetts, is experiencing a growth and development boom in the mid-1980's. This increase in development and development pressure has had a negative impact on farming in several ways. Not only has development removed significant acreage from farmland, but increasing development pressures have raised land prices, making it more difficult for a farmer to rent or acquire land. The construction of residences in close proximity to farms without buffer areas magnifies difficulties with trespassing, vandalism, crop destruction or pilfering, and nuisance complaints.

Since the Belchertown farmland preservation planning effort was initiated in 1986, seven farmland owners have sold 9 parcels for development, totalling approximately 584 acres. Four of these farms were large farms with a high percentage of prime farmland soils.

Current Agricultural Land Use

In order to assess the current status of farmland in Belchertown, the PVPC developed the "Belchertown Farmland Matrix" (see Appendix A). The matrix is derived from data obtained from the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, augmented, refined and verified by PVPC through aerial photo interpretation, site visits to all Belchertown farm parcels, soils maps and assessor's data.





The matrix lists 150 farm parcels which are held by 110 owners, totalling 7181.93 acres. (These acreage totals will differ from Mass. Map Down in method of computation, since total land parcels are tabulated including wooded portions of farms.)

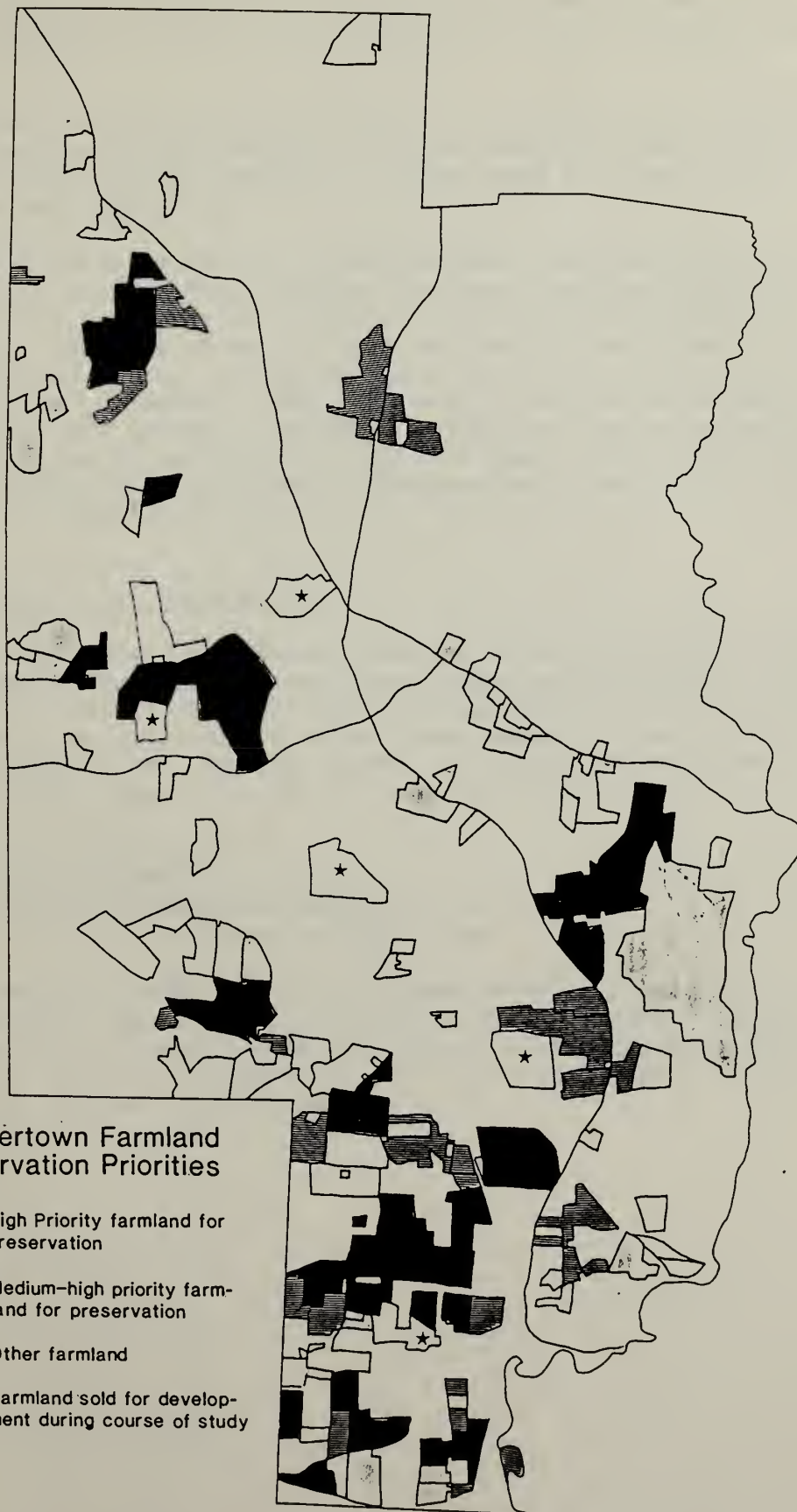
CURRENT AGRICULTURAL ACREAGE-BELCHERTOWN

Type	Acreage	% of Total
Active Food Producers (vegetables, fruit, dairy, meat)	3421.79	47.6%
Hay and Pasture	1965.87	27.4%
Mixed Woodlands, Abandoned farms, Hobby farms	1794.27	25.0%
TOTAL	7181.93	100%

Source: Belchertown Farmland Matrix

Belchertown Farmland Preservation Priorities

-  High Priority farmland for preservation
-  Medium-high priority farmland for preservation
-  Other farmland
-  Farmland sold for development during course of study



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns 1260 acres of land in the "active food producer" category, of which 503 are leased to the New England Small Farm Institute, and 80 are orchards in the University of Massachusetts Agriculture Experiment Station.

The average size of a farm in Belchertown is 65 acres, considerably below the state and Hampshire County averages (115 acres and 124 acres respectively). However, most of the full-time farms in Belchertown are considerably larger than this average figure.

The Belchertown farmland matrix contains detailed information for each of the 150 farm parcels on farm type, land use, acreage, important agricultural soils, and other important environmental or cultural characteristics. It is significant to note that of the 150 farm parcels, 106 are adjacent to other farm or conservation land, making them more feasible to operate as part of a "critical mass" of farmland. Seven farm parcels have the added value of a historic home on the property. While 28 parcels are located in part within the floodplain, and 40 parcels are within the Town's water supply protection district. The preservation of these farmlands would also help to achieve collateral environmental objectives.

Priority Farmlands for Preservation

The Belchertown Farmland Matrix represents an effort to prioritize the Town's most important farmlands for preservation, based upon objective criteria. Given that the community has very limited resources available for preservation of farmlands, it is important to target these resources toward preserving the best, most viable of the remaining farms. The matrix assigns numerical values to each farm parcel based upon the following objective criteria:

- o predominant land use
- o size of farm
- o amount of important farmland soils
- o collateral environmental objectives.

Appendix A explains these criteria in greater detail. Finally, the total numerical value for each parcel is translated into a priority rating (i.e., high, medium, low). These ratings can be used in determining which farmlands should receive priority attention in applying the preservation strategies recommended at the end of this report.

Section V

FARM ISSUES AND FARMER ATTITUDES IN BELCHERTOWN

The information contained in this section is based upon a survey sent to all farmland owners in Belchertown, or administered in person by volunteers. A total of 39 farmland owners responded to the survey. The following section contains a summary and interpretation of the survey results which is followed by a complete tabulation of the results. It should be noted that this data does not include every farm parcel in Belchertown, being limited to farmland owners who responded to the survey.

Farmer Characteristics

The average family farm has existed in the same location in Belchertown for forty years. It is interesting to note that there have been several relatively new farm operations started in Belchertown in recent years; four farms are less than ten years old; a total of 13 farms are less than twenty years old.

The average age of the Belchertown farmer is 55. Fourteen farmers are approaching retirement, being 60 years or older. Six farmers are under the age of 40. Only 12 farmers have an interested successor to carry on their farm operations after their retirement; 17 farmers have no successor.

Farm Employment

Eleven of 39 Belchertown farmers responding to the survey have stated that farming is their main occupation, an additional two farmers are retired, and the remaining 26 farmland owners hold other principal jobs outside farming which is consistent with national trends toward off-farm employment.

Farms in Belchertown employ 33 persons full-time, 41 persons part-time and at least 80 persons on a seasonal basis. This employment total is larger than any other single private sector employer in Belchertown. In fact, Atkins Farms Fruit Marketing Inc. is one of Belchertown's largest private sector employers.

Farm Type

The use of farmland for growing hay or for pasture is the predominant farm type in Belchertown, including 27 farms. The next most important farm types are: beef (10 farms); fruit (8 farms); dairy (7 farms); sheep (5 farms); vegetables (4 farms); corn (4 farms); and poultry (2 farms). Many farmland owners use their land for more than one product. By acreage, hay and pasture lands account for 51.6% of Belchertown's farmlands, followed by fruit orchard lands (14.4%) and corn fields (10.7%).

Farm Size

The average farm size in Belchertown is 92 acres; this is consistent with the state average of 115 acres. The small size relative to the national average of 425 acres is a factor of hilly topography, scattered areas of fertile soils, colonial land tenure patterns and high land prices. There are eight farms in Belchertown which are larger than 200 acres.

Land rental is not so widespread in Belchertown as in other Hampshire County farm communities. Only six of 39 farmland owners rent their land to another farmer; and only six farmers rent land from another owner.

Sale of Farm Products

The primary method of selling farm products is direct to consumers, which is used by 10 of the 39 farms responding to the survey. Other important means of farm product sales, in descending order of importance are: to wholesalers; other local farmers; co-operatives; retailers; farmer's markets; auctions; and via pick-your-own operations.

Most farmers did not report having serious marketing problems for their farm products. Several dairy farmers reported concerns for low milk prices; several other farmers noted difficulties in selling produce locally. Problems were noted in selling to large chain stores and to wholesalers who only want prime produce in large quantities and whose payments are unreliable.

Farm Problems

Farmers reported numerous problems hindering their ability to make a living at farming. The most frequently reported problem was the high cost and lack of availability of farm machinery, parts, fertilizers and pesticides. Many farmers also complained of high property taxes; however, it should be noted that less than half of Belchertown's farmers have enrolled their land under Chapter 61a, the reduced farmland assessment program. A key problem, reported by almost half of the Town's farmers, was pressure to develop their land. Other important problems facing Belchertown farmers are trespassing, vandalism of farm crops or property, and the lack of availability of farm labor.

Suggested Town Assistance

When asked what actions the Town could take to help farmers overcome their problems, the most frequent farmer response was to "lower property taxes for farmland". Other frequent suggestions were to: control growth and development pressures; provide better police enforcement to prevent vandalism; enact a right-to-farm law; and educate school children about farms and farm problems.

Farmland Preservation

Ninety-five percent of the farmers responding to the survey felt that farmland preservation was important in Belchertown. However, only one farm in Belchertown has been preserved under the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program, and less than half of the farmers have enrolled in the Chapter 61a reduced farmland tax assessment program.

Farmers were polled to determine their attitudes on three potential local farmland preservation techniques. The most strongly supported technique was the establishment of an Agricultural Incentive District which was favored by 87% of the farmers responding. A farmland preservation zoning district was also supported by a majority of farmers, 55%. Finally, the appropriation of town funds for purchase of farmland development rights was supported by 51% of the Town's farmers.

Detailed Tabulation of Farmer Responses

The following pages contain a detailed breakdown of all farmer responses and specific comments from the survey, including a list of all farmers responding.

BELCHERTOWN FARMER SURVEY - TABULATION OF RESPONSES

1. Total number of farmers responding: 39

Names of farmers or farm owners responding:

Robert Riendel	Harvey Sampson
David Sussman	Bernice Bellerose
Andrew Bartlett/White Oak Farm	Francis Loftus
Michael & Cheryl Szumski	Albert Brighenti
Thomas Rae	John Russell
Edward & Janet Land	Albert Boulrice
Karin McCann	Joe Duda
E.J. Belisle, Jr.	John Marshall
Erwyn & Mary Brown	William Trombly
Richard Knight	Matthew Sliwa
Theresa Seidal	Anthony Rossi
Mildred Cole	Frank Wenzel
Ken & Nancy Hamel	Howard Atkins
Merrill Paine	Donald & Janet Minney
Richard Cook, Sr.	Peter Prolzima
Glenn & Louise Butler	W. Ira Shattuck/Devon Lane Farm
Hazel Zitka	Raymond & Lillian Campbell
Michael Soja	Roger Bowler
Charles & Betty Jean Jackson	Joe Austin
	Hubert & Jennie Greene

2. How many years has your family farmed this location?

<u>4</u>	0-9 years			
<u>9</u>	0-19 years	<u>5</u>	60-99 years	Average: <u>40</u>
<u>10</u>	20-39 years	<u>1</u>	100 + years	
<u>10</u>	40-59			

3. Your age?

<u>6</u>	20-39	<u>10</u>	50-59	Average: <u>55</u>
<u>8</u>	40-49	<u>15</u>	60 +	

4. What kind of farming do you participate in? (can be more than one)

<u>27</u>	Hay or Pasture	<u>5</u>	Sheep
<u>8</u>	Fruit	<u>3</u>	Horses
<u>7</u>	Dairy	<u>4</u>	Vegetables
<u>10</u>	Beef	<u>2</u>	Poultry
<u>4</u>	Corn	<u>11</u>	Wood
		<u>2</u>	Christmas trees

5. How many acres do you own?

<u>9</u>	0-19 acres	Average: <u>92</u>
<u>7</u>	20-49 acres	
<u>6</u>	50-99 acres	
<u>8</u>	100-199 acres	
<u>8</u>	200 + acres	

6. How many acres do you rent from another farmer?

<u>33</u>	0 acres
<u>3</u>	1-49 acres
<u>2</u>	50-99 acres
<u>1</u>	100 + acres

7. How many acres do you rent to another farmer?

<u>33</u>	0 acres
<u>2</u>	1-29 acres
<u>3</u>	30-59 acres
<u>1</u>	60 + acres

8. Is farming your main occupation?

<u>11</u>	Yes
<u>26</u>	No
<u>2</u>	Retired

9. How many persons does your farm employ, including yourself and family?

o Full-time

<u>14</u>	Yes
<u>21</u>	No
<u>33</u>	Total number

o Part-time

<u>18</u>	Yes
<u>19</u>	No
<u>41</u>	Total number

o Seasonal

<u>16</u>	Yes
<u>18</u>	No
<u>80</u>	+ Total number

10. In 1986, how many acres of land did you farm for?
(Communitywide Totals)

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Hay	672 acres	28.8%
Pasture	533 acres	22.8%
Fruit	335 acres	14.4%
Corn	249 acres	10.7%
Vegetables	8 acres	.3%
Woods	536 acres	23.0%
TOTAL	2,333 acres	100%

11. Where are your farm products sold?

10 Direct to consumers
6 Wholesale
3 Co-operative
3 Retailers
2 Pick-your-own
3 Farmer's markets
2 Auction
5 Local farmers
7 No. of no answers

12. What kind of marketing problems do you have?

2 Low prices for milk
1 Wholesale payments unreliable
1 Commission fees are high
1 Don't produce enough for demand
24 None or no answer
1 Resistance to local products
2 Local marketing
1 Costs overrun prices

13. Have you had offers from developers to buy your farm in the past year?

19 Yes
18 No

14. Rank the following problems in order of importance to you and your operations (high and medium priorities noted)

21 Machinery, parts, cost and availability
18 Development pressures
21 Property taxes
20 Cost of fertilizers, pesticides, etc.
10 Availability of labor
11 Trespassing
10 Vandalism
8 Zoning restrictions
6 Inheritance taxes
4 Nuisance complaints
4 Lack of local outlets for produce
3 Lack of storage or processing centers in this region

Other

1 Feed costs
1 Low prices
1 Beavers flooding land
1 Can't compete with Western farmers
1 Debt to banks
1 Dogs
1 Nuisance taxes (small buildings - animals)

15. What can the Town do to help farmers overcome these problems?

10 Lower property taxes for farmland
3 Better police enforcement to prevent vandalism
4 Control growth and development pressures
3 Right-to-Farm Law

Other specific responses:

"Eliminate farm animal and machinery tax."
 "Participate in and generate regional agricultural policies aimed at making farming a priority issue."
 "Nothing - the problems are mainly beyond local control, at the federal level."
 "You are ten years too late."
 "Stop making it so easy for developers to buy farmland."
 "Realize that farmland has a much larger value than just the products it can produce. Solutions are not simple and cannot be universally applied."
 "Don't know."
 "Don't pass regulations that reduce our rights."
 "Attract an industrial tax base to lower other property taxes."

16. What kind of educational or promotional program could the Town undertake to help farmers?

"Educate children about problems of vandalizing farms."
 "Take school children to visit farms."
 "Provide recognition to farmers through incentive programs."
 "Promote local products; profitability/ecology optimization."
 "It may be too late to reverse process."
 "Elementary school agricultural awareness programs."
 "Advertise local farms in town literature."
 "Educational programs by conservation department and USDA."

17. Do you think farmland preservation is important?

35 Yes
0 No
1 Not sure
1 Too late

18. Is your farm protected under:

1 APR Program
19 Chapter 61a
16 Neither
1 NA

19. Do you have an interested successor to carry on your farming operation upon your retirement?

<u>12</u>	Yes
<u>17</u>	No
<u>8</u>	Not sure

20. Would you support the following farmland preservation techniques?

Farmland Preservation Zoning District

<u>21</u>	Yes
<u>12</u>	No
<u>5</u>	Not sure (not permanent enough)

Agricultural Incentive District

<u>33</u>	Yes
<u>1</u>	No
<u>4</u>	Not sure

Town funds for purchase of development rights

<u>19</u>	Yes
<u>13</u>	No
<u>5</u>	Not sure

Section VI

OPTIONS FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION

The Need for Community-level Action

Massachusetts leads most states in the nation in developing state programs to preserve farmland. Its Agricultural Preservation Restriction program was among the first in the nation to use state funds to purchase development rights on farms and as of 1987, had saved 205 farms. Massachusetts has reduced real estate taxes on farmlands throughout the state using the Chapter 61a Farmland Assessment Act which exchanges lower taxes for restrictions on development. Massachusetts has promoted sale of locally grown farm products through television, radio and newspaper ads under the "Massachusetts Grown and Fresher" campaign. Despite these innovative and concerted efforts, Massachusetts' farmland acreage continues to be eroded by urban expansion. There are many important opportunities for communities to take actions which support and expand the state's goal of farmland preservation. Using strategies such as innovative agricultural zoning, agricultural incentive areas, establishing a land trust or fund, restricting sewer and water line extensions, promoting local farms and produce, and committing local funds for purchase of development rights, communities can be effective in creating a better future for agriculture. The following section describes some of these strategies in greater detail:

Farmland Preservation Strategy #1

INNOVATIVE AGRICULTURAL ZONING

Type of Measure

A zoning ordinance controls the type and density of development within a defined area. Agricultural zoning treats farmland as a long-term land use, not as land that is waiting to be developed.

Method of Adoption

Adoption requires two-thirds majority vote of Town Meeting or Council to amend zoning bylaw. Bylaw must be consistent with the authorization of the state zoning enabling act, M.G.L. Chapter 40A.

Problem Addressed

Zoning can be an effective tool in controlling urban development on agricultural land, and in directing future growth to appropriate areas of the community.

Description

One of the most important factors contributing to the decrease in agricultural land appears to be the fact that zoning bylaws in most towns permit low-density residential use of one acre or less in agricultural lands, as well as industrial and commercial use in some cases. In fact, most town zoning ordinances carry the implicit assumption that farming is a residual or temporary land use, soon to be displaced by urban development. Thus, zoning is often in direct opposition to publicly professed land use objectives of preserving agricultural land. The ultimate objective of zoning should be to promote land uses best suited to the characteristics of the site and community, and to insure use relationships which are compatible and supportive of public service efficiency.

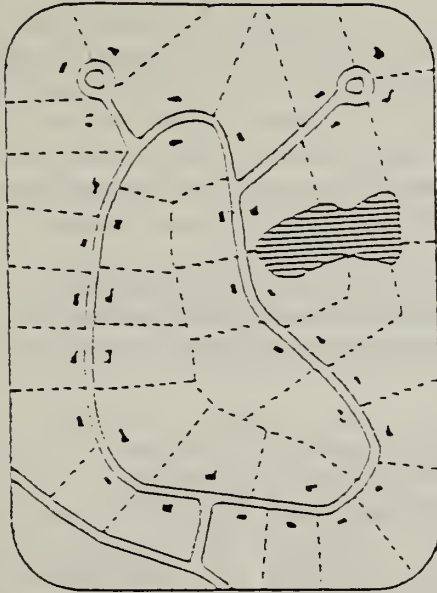
Zoning is the most common agricultural preservation technique used by local governments. Over the past decade at least 270 jurisdictions (104 counties and 166 municipalities) have adopted some form of agricultural zoning. (National Agricultural Lands Study, 1981).

Traditionally, many communities having attempted to preserve farmland have adopted large-lot zoning or exclusive agricultural zoning. The techniques have the advantages of protecting large blocks of farmland without intrusions of urban development; however, they also have several associated problems. Both large-lot and exclusive agricultural zoning often result in a loss in a tract of land's market value, thus affecting the farmer's equity. Secondly, if overly restrictive, these techniques may be challenged on the legal grounds that they constitute a taking without just compensation, or that they represent exclusionary zoning.

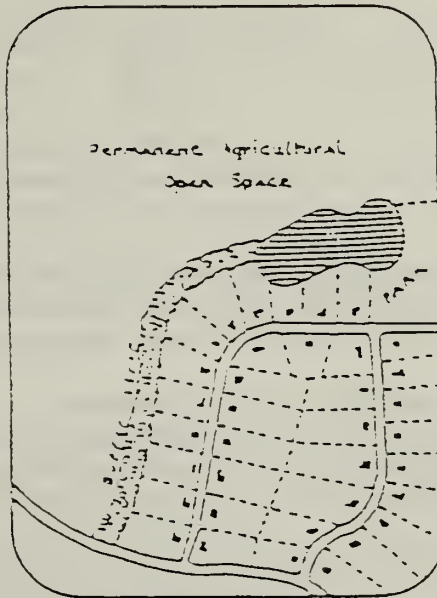
Recently, communities have begun exploring more flexible, innovative zoning techniques which avoid the pitfalls described above and enjoy the support of farmers. Most of the techniques allow some carefully controlled development of farm parcels. Several of the techniques are described in greater detail in the following section.

Zoning Examples

Required Planned Unit Developments have been adopted to protect farmlands in South Berwick and four other southern Maine communities. The towns' zoning bylaw requires that development proposals encompassing more than ten acres of farmland be laid out according to "cluster" standards. The number of houselots is determined based upon 2 acres per dwelling unit; however, since



- 80 acre parcel
- 36 lots (2 acres each)
- 4600 feet of road
- No farmland left
- No park, no pond access except from 6 lots



- 80 acre parcel
- 36 lots (1/2 acre each)
- 2100 feet of road
- 50 acres of farmland left
- 1 1/2 acre park with pond access for all residents.

developments are clustered on smaller lots, large tracts of agricultural open space are left permanently open. Buildings and roads must be located on the portion of the parcel with soils least suited for agriculture, preferably wooded sections of the farm. A buffer between residential and farm areas is requested. The best farmland soils are left open under permanent conservation restriction to be leased or sold to a farmer. The farmer can receive his full equity on his land, but can continue farming. Residents in the planned unit development have smaller lots, but are surrounded by permanently protected open space.

Area-based Allocation Zones have been adopted by 35 counties or towns nationally, including many in York County, Pennsylvania. It is a flexible type of zoning which allocates a specified number of dwelling units per area, but allows an area-based allocation of one dwelling unit per 25 acres, combined with a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet.

Some communities have established sliding-scale, area-based allocation zones wherein the allowable density decreases as the parcel size increases.

Washington, Pennsylvania, for example, allocates dwelling units according to the following formula:

<u>Size of Tracts</u>	<u>Number of Dwellings Permitted</u>
0-30 acres	3
30-60 acres	4
60-90 acres	5
90-120 acres	6

The town has a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet.

Area-based allocation zones often offer bonus incentives of additional dwelling units to encourage cluster development. Residences are clustered on a small fraction of a tract which is least appropriate for agriculture, while retaining large blocks of farmland for agricultural use. This is in contrast to standard large lot zoning which encourages the splitting of parcels to the minimum lot size. In addition, this technique allows owners to realize appreciation in the value of their land.

Conditional Use Zones are agricultural districts which allow non-farm dwellings only if they have met stringent conditions. For example, in Deschutes County, Oregon, these conditions include requiring that the dwelling:

- 1) be compatible with farm uses
- 2) not interfere with farming practices
- 3) be situated on land generally unsuitable for farming
- 4) not alter the stability of the land use plan of the area

With the use of stringent criteria to evaluate proposed non-farm dwellings, conditional use zones tend to produce development which is more compatible with farming than the other non-exclusive agricultural zoning techniques. The costs of administering such a program can be relatively high due to the level of time and effort required from both applicants and local officials in evaluating proposed non-farm dwellings.

Advantages/Disadvantages

The pros and cons of these innovative zoning techniques are discussed below:

Advantages

- Protects farmland, recognizes critical mass
- Reduces and controls urban intrusion into farm areas
- Developments must occur on non-farm soils and be buffered from farms
- Reduces public service costs
- Low administration costs
- Allows farmers to receive equity in land
- Changes expectations of farmers regarding the future of farming

Disadvantages

- Allows some development in farm areas
- Not permanent (subject to rezoning)

Agricultural Zoning - Summary

Agricultural zoning ordinances have been adopted and refined in over 270 jurisdictions nationwide. If based on sound, comprehensive data regarding soil quality, land use patterns and agricultural activity, they can enjoy the support of farmers and developers alike. Farmers have generally supported agricultural zoning ordinances which are flexible enough to allow non-productive land to be developed through rezoning or obtaining conditional use permits. Agricultural zoning has commonly not been supported by farmers on the urban-suburban fringe as well as farmers nearing retirement who felt that realization of the development value of their land was essential to a financially stable future. Developers have supported agricultural zoning when

development districts were concurrently created in non-agricultural areas to insure the availability of sufficient land for new construction. This is an important consideration in order to insure that agricultural zoning districts do not conflict with fair housing laws, such as Chapter 774 in Massachusetts.

Since owners whose land is zoned for low density often have strong economic incentives to press for zoning variances, zoning can be vulnerable to change. Therefore, communities adopting agricultural zoning ordinances must also develop and apply adequate criteria for rezoning, or the protection accorded to agricultural activities may be reduced or perhaps lost. Rezoning should generally be granted only to those areas not well suited to agricultural use or designated for growth in comprehensive plans.

In general, evidence suggests that agricultural zoning ordinances, particularly if they have strong political support, can deflect development pressures away from prime farmlands to areas designated for growth. They can also significantly change the expectations of farmers and developers as to the development potential of farmland. Ordinances are more likely to be successful where cohesive units of farmland have been preserved, and the intrusion of non-farm uses has been stringently limited.

However, local communities have learned through experience that zoning alone is not enough to save farms and farmland. As one writer put it, "zoning land for agriculture does not produce a farm any more than zoning for industry produces a factory". (Perspectives on Agricultural Land Policy, Anderson). The extension of water and sewer lines can effectively subvert exclusive agricultural zoning. Similarly, if a community restricts extensions of sewer and water lines, but neglects to zone, subdivisions can spring up utilizing septic systems and private wells.

Thus, agricultural zoning has been most effective when used in conjunction with other farmland preservation techniques, in particular, transfer of development rights, tax incentives, marketing campaigns, and any other program that support the continued development of the agricultural economic base.

Farmland Preservation Strategy #2

AGRICULTURAL INCENTIVE DISTRICTS

Problem Addressed

As residential areas expand and begin to encroach on agricultural lands, conflicts often arise between these uses and conversion pressures heighten. Communities going through this kind of transition may see formerly cohesive tracts of farmland fractured into small disjointed pieces. Gradually and increasingly, both the farmers and the general public come to think of farming as a lifestyle and land use on its way out. Massachusetts' new Right-to-Farm Law is intended to address these problems by authorizing municipalities to establish agricultural incentive areas for the purpose of protecting and promoting farming as the dominant and preferred land use within these districts.

Method of Adoption

The establishment of an Agricultural Incentive Area entails:

- o The establishment of an Agricultural Incentive Area committee by the Board of Selectmen. This committee shall consist of 7 members; 3 farmers, 1 selectmen, 1 Planning Board member, 1 member of the Conservation Commission, and a representative of the general public.
- o The mapping of farmland characteristics by the committee (the maps produced by the PVPC for this project will meet these requirements).
- o The committee's recommendation and adoption of an agricultural incentive area plan. The proposed district may not contain any land which has not been approved for inclusion by the owner.
- o The submission of the plan to the Department of Food and Agriculture for approval by the Agricultural Lands Preservation Committee.
- o The approval of the plan by a two-thirds vote of town meeting.

Description

Farmers who join an agricultural incentive area are eligible for certain benefits in return for their agreement to place some minor restrictions on the sale of their property. Benefits for participating farmers include; assessment under Chapter 61A for reduced property taxes, exemption from special or betterment assessments while in farming, priority eligibility for Agricultural Preservation Restrictions, and increased protection from nuisance suits. (Under M.G.L. Chapter III, Section 125A, farmers are protected only against nuisance suits involving odors. The Right-to-Farm Law protects them from suits resulting from any normal farm operation.) However, no land within the district may be sold without the notification of the town and the Department of Food and Agriculture (DFA). The Town and DFA have a first refusal option to the property and may purchase the property in fee or

purchase its development rights with its sale to a private individual or group. Agricultural Districting programs are generally popular with farmers in other states. Districts seem to instill in them an enhanced sense of community in being part of a cooperative effort to maintain farming as a way of life. This in turn builds political strength and organization. The establishment of agricultural districts can also signify the non-farming community's recognition of the importance of farming and farmlands. It says "we want to keep a viable farm community in our town".

Districting is not without its drawbacks, however. It is an involved and time consuming process. It does not provide permanent protection against development particularly in areas of intense urban growth where development pressures are high.

Examples

Agricultural districting has been practiced in several states for a number of years, longest and closest to home in New York. The New York state program differs from the Commonwealth's in a few aspects. It is administered on a county rather than town level. It is somewhat stronger in that in addition to the benefits offered in Massachusetts' Right-to-Farm Law, it protects farms against public investments which promote non-farm development, restricts public agencies in their authority to take land by eminent domain, and compensates local governments for lost tax revenues. Sixty percent of New York's farmland is within agricultural districts, and farmers are generally pleased with the program.

The community of Sterling, Massachusetts has had an agricultural district bylaw since 1982. This ordinance had goals and provisions similar to those of the Right-to-Farm Law, but until passage of the state legislation, little legal authority with which to carry them out.

LAND TRUSTS

Farmland Preservation Strategy #3

Problem Addressed

As farmland on the suburban fringe comes under increasingly strong development pressure, its highest value becomes its market price rather than its productivity. Farmland that comes up for sale is often beyond the financial means of people who would like to farm and live on it, and hence is usually lost to development. Quite often, the state's Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program or town government cannot act quickly enough to save the farm. A Land Trust can. Land Trusts are private non-profit, charitable organizations that can more quickly acquire important agricultural parcels, holding land or development rights in perpetuity, and leasing or selling land back to farmers at reasonable rates.

Description

The land trust concept dates from colonial times and emphasizes community control and stewardship of farmlands rather than private ownership. A land trust would typically acquire land by purchase, donation, or deed transfer,

and subsequently lease acreage to farmers on a low interest, long-term basis, (usually 99 years, renewable and inheritable). Money to buy land is obtained both from a revolving fund as well as bank lines of credit. Taxes are paid by the trust through lease fees.

Once a farm has been taken over by a trust, it is permanently removed from the real estate market thus blocking further speculation.

Land trusts have the advantage of being able to move more quickly than government agencies in protecting important agricultural lands, and they are well suited to the Pioneer Valley where the majority of farms are relatively small (i.e., less than 1000 acres). They do, however, require permanent funding in significant amounts. In a community with limited resources, establishing a land trust will require securing grants or donations from foundations, land owners or other private sources.

Example of Land Trusts, Funds or Banks

There are several land trusts operating on state, regional and community levels which are currently active in the Pioneer Valley, including the following:

- o The recently established Valley Land Fund, based in Hatfield, Massachusetts, serves the three-county Hampshire-Hampden-Franklin area. The VLF has been established to provide advance acquisition of environmentally significant lands such as farmlands which are threatened with imminent development. The VLF uses the "revolving fund" principle to move quickly to purchase land, development rights, conservation restrictions or options in order to preserve threatened lands, particularly where time is of the essence. VLF will hold lands or rights until towns or other organizations can secure funds to repurchase lands. The VLF is working to protect the best of the Connecticut Valley's unique landscapes, including prime farmland, significant archeological sites and important wildlife areas. The VLF's first purchase has been a 50-acre strawberry farm in Montague. The farm is prime agricultural land and includes more than a half mile of river frontage.
- o The Massachusetts Farm and Conservation Lands Trust based in Beverly, Massachusetts is the largest and most experienced trust protecting Commonwealth farmlands. As of 1984 had acquired and resold or leased 14 parcels totaling 1,418 acres, primarily in the eastern part of the state.
- o The Kestrel Trust, based in Amherst, is active in that town and adjacent communities. Land transactions are conducted in partnership with town Conservation Commissions. Usually the trust will fund the entire initial purchase, and later sell to the town at a one-third reduction. Farmland thus acquired by the town is leased to farmers by the conservation commission.
- o The Pascommuck Conservation Trust is a recently formed organization based in Easthampton. The Trust has acquired a total of 52 acres for conservation purposes in that town and is interested in farmland protection.

- o Farther up the Connecticut Valley in Brattleboro, Vermont there is an example of an effort to implement the concept of land banking in a public setting. This town has appropriated \$50,000 to operate an Agricultural Land Protection Revolving Loan Fund. These monies would be used to protect locally important farmland through purchase of land and subsequent leasing or the purchase of conservation restrictions.

Farmland Preservation Strategy #4

PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

The Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture's Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program has been an extremely useful tool in preserving agricultural lands. Massachusetts has spent \$45 million to purchase development rights on over 20,000 acres of farmland. The state's legislature is expected to appropriate significant, additional funds to continue this program.

As the APR gains the confidence of the farm community and grows in popularity, an increasing number of farms are "competing" for very limited funds. In making funding decisions, the Department of Food and Agriculture considers several criteria, including:

- quality of soils for agriculture
- fair market value of land
- whether the acquisition would help preserve the agricultural potential of Massachusetts
- cost of purchase in relation to benefits
- degree of threat to the parcel
- opportunities for family farm ownership and employment
- accomplishment of collateral environmental objectives
- compatibility with municipal plans and zoning
- willingness of community to provide local funds in support of application.

In other words, there are several ways in which a community can improve the priority level of its farms for APR funding. By adopting a local Farmland Preservation Plan and compatible agricultural zoning, a community is making a commitment toward the preservation of farmland that will be recognized by the APR program. Further communities which set aside local funds to assist with APR purchase costs, legal fees and enforcement, receive priority consideration for APR purchases.

In the Pioneer Valley Region, the Town of Amherst is an excellent example of successful use of local funds to "leverage" significant amounts of APR funds. As of 1987, Amherst has helped to secure the purchase of development rights on 17 farms. The Town has committed \$5,000 in local funds toward each APR purchase, or a total investment of \$85,000. As a result, Amherst is far ahead of other Pioneer Valley communities in preserving its threatened agricultural resources.

Farmland Preservation Strategy #5

SEWER AND WATER SERVICE PLANNING

The availability of public sewer and water service can be an important factor in determining the development potential of a land parcel. Municipalities can help to channel development away from agricultural lands by effectively planning for sewer and water services to be extended only to those areas designated for growth.

The following are recommended guidelines for the provision of sewer and water service:

- (1) Public water and sewer service should not be extended to areas designated within the Agricultural Preservation District. Appropriate modifications should be made to municipal sewerage plans.
- (2) In those areas experiencing on-site sewage disposal problems, alternative and innovative solutions to those problems should be sought, such as community septic systems.
- (3) Publicly-sponsored individual and community septic systems should be investigated for application in areas experiencing community-wide or scattered public health problems, beyond the existing sewer service area.
- (4) Cluster zoning provisions can be developed to accommodate and encourage the use of alternative community disposal systems in outlying areas.

Some municipalities have utilized sewer and water service moratoriums as a growth management tool. They have required that new developments have public sewer and water service, and then refused to extend such facilities to areas which are to be kept undeveloped. This technique raises the legal issue of whether a municipality has the legal duty to provide water and sewer services to all members of the public if it has the carrying and treatment capacity to do so. This issue has resulted in several court challenges, with the courts generally holding that local governments have a measure of discretion in deciding whether to extend utilities within their borders.

The establishment of sewer and water districts is another option for communities desiring complete control over sewer and water extensions. Under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 92, districts may be established with defined boundaries. Sewer and water lines cannot be extended beyond the boundaries of the district without town meeting or city council action to expand the district.

Section VII

RECOMMENDED FARMLAND PRESERVATION STRATEGY FOR BELCHERTOWN

Based upon a year-long investigation of potential local strategies for farmland preservation, and a detailed attitudinal survey of farmland owners in Belchertown, a recommended "Farmland Preservation Strategy for Belchertown" has been developed. Components of the strategy have been selected which meet the following criteria:

- o can be effective in preserving farms or farmlands
- o are relatively inexpensive for communities to put into action
- o offer incentives for farmers to keep farming
- o do not take away farmer's rights or place additional costs or burdens on farmers
- o allow for voluntary participation of farmers
- o can be implemented by a largely volunteer, part-time town government.

While each component of the strategy is a worthwhile action, in order to be truly effective, the strategy should be adopted as a comprehensive package. In this way, components of the strategy can work to reinforce or complement each other. It is recommended that the steps be adopted in the following order:

Recommendation #1 - ESTABLISH AN AGRICULTURAL INCENTIVE AREA

The establishment of an Agricultural Incentive Area was supported by 33 out of 38 Belchertown farmland owners responding to the attitudinal survey. This is an important first step in which the community makes a statement that "farming is an important land use which should continue". The state's Right-to-Farm law enables communities to establish a voluntary program designating an area where farm operations should be protected and farmers given incentives to re-invest in their businesses. The incentive area provides a focus for farmland preservation efforts, and gives the town additional tools to save farmland. This action can serve as a foundation upon which other farmland preservation strategies are built.

Recommendation #2 - ADOPT INNOVATIVE AGRICULTURAL ZONING

The adoption of an innovative Agricultural Preservation Zoning District was supported by 21 of 38 farmers responding to the attitudinal survey. An Agricultural Preservation District would encourage long-term retention of important farmlands. However, the zoning bylaw would be flexible enough to allow farmland owners to ultimately retrieve their "equity" in the land through limited development. If development on the farm became necessary, the allowed number of lots would be clustered on the least productive portions of the farm, and extensively buffered from surrounding farm operations. As a result, the best farmlands would be permanently preserved as open land allowing farming to continue. Addition of lands to the Agricultural Preservation Zoning District should be on a voluntary basis, consistent with the Agricultural Incentive Area.

Recommendation #3 - COMMIT LOCAL FUNDS FOR PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

The use of town funds for the purchase of development rights was supported by 19 of 37 farmland owners responding to the attitudinal survey. By committing a modest amount of local funds as a "local share" towards the purchase of development rights under the state's Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program, Belchertown can increase the number of local APR purchases. Competition for limited APR funds is fierce, and in making funding decisions, the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture frequently invests APR funds in communities willing to provide a local match or otherwise evidence its concern for preserving farmland. The adoption of an Agricultural Incentive Area or zoning district will further improve Belchertown's priority level for APR funds. In determining where local funds for APR purchases should be spent, Belchertown should utilize the "Belchertown Farm Matrix" contained in Appendix A, which prioritizes farms for preservation based on objective criteria (e.g. soils, land use, acreage).

Recommendation #4 - ESTABLISH POLICIES RESTRICTING SEWER AND WATER EXTENSIONS

The extension of public sewer and water lines encourages the conversion of farmland to houselots by lowering development costs and removing septic tank limitations. Belchertown should adopt a formal policy restricting sewer and water line extensions to the Agricultural Incentive Area.

Recommendation #5 - ESTABLISH OR JOIN A LAND TRUST/FUND

Belchertown should set aside funds which can be used to purchase priority agricultural parcels which are in imminent danger of conversion. Funds could be used in exercising the Town's right of first refusal for parcels being sold in the Agricultural Incentive Area. Belchertown could either pool funds with one of the existing regional land trusts, or could establish a local revolving fund, to purchase lands or development rights for later transfer to the state's APR program. Such a fund would give Belchertown the ability to move more quickly to preserve threatened lands.

The source of funds can be Chapter 61a roll-back taxes which must be paid when farmlands are converted to urban uses. Currently, these extra funds revert back to the Town's general fund. However, Belchertown could set up a stabilization fund similar to the type used for sewer connection fees, to hold these monies. This type of fund would require an initial Town Meeting vote, but beyond that, the Selectmen would vote either annually or semi-annually to divert roll-back tax revenues to the administrator of the stabilization fund (e.g. Conservation Commission).

Recommendation #6 - PROMOTE LOCAL FARMS AND PRODUCE

Belchertown should develop school programs and a promotional brochure to increase public awareness of local farms and farm products. A promotional brochure should be developed listing local farms, locations, and products available in various seasons. The brochure should be distributed to area residents, schools, institutions and businesses with a plea from the Town to support local farmers and buy local produce. Similarly, local school programs should be developed with farm tours to educate children about farm operations, products and local history. Such school programs could also promote respect for farms and prevent vandalism or crop damage.

Recommendation #7 - PROVIDE IMPROVED POLICE PROTECTION

Vandalism and destruction of farm property, theft and damage of crops, and trespassing are significant problems for farmers in Belchertown. In a growing suburban community, farmers are having increasing difficulty in protecting their crops and property and in getting local police to treat their requests for help seriously. Belchertown farmers have reported corn and squash crops destroyed by four-wheeled all-terrain vehicles, barns burnt down, and farm buildings disassembled. The suspected source of most problems is local school-aged children with off-road motorbikes or vehicles; however, farmer complaints are not resulting in catching culprits. Belchertown should provide improved police protection in responding to farmer complaints and providing appropriate penalties for vandals.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) Anderson, Perspectives on Agricultural Land Policy
- 2) Coughlin, Robert and John Keene, (The Protection of Farmland: A Reference Guidebook for State and Local Governments, National Agricultural Lands Study, Washington, D.C. 1981
- 3) Gay's Gazetteer of Hampshire County, Massachusetts 1964-1987
- 4) Holland, Josiah Gilbert, History of Western Massachusetts
- 5) Krohe, James Jr., "Buy Now, Save Later: A Farmland Proposal", Planning, November, 1986
- 6) MacConnell, William, Remote Sensing: 20 Years of Change in Hampshire County, Amherst, Massachusetts 1974
- 7) New England Small Farm Institute, telephone interview, June, 1987.
- 8) U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1982 Census of Agriculture - Massachusetts, September, 1984
- 9) Western Massachusetts Economic Development Conference, The Role of Agriculture in the Economy of Western Massachusetts, Spring, 1987.

Section VIIIAPPENDICES

- A. Belchertown Farmland Matrix
- B. Agricultural Incentive Area Petition
- C. Agricultural Preservation Zoning Bylaw
- D. Newspaper Coverage

APPENDIX A

BELCHERTOWN FARMLAND MATRIX

KEY FOR BELCHERTOWN FARMLAND MATRIX

Weighting System and Criteria:

1) Predominant Land Use	(Maximum 25 points)	
o Active Food Producers (e.g. vegetable, fruit, beef, dairy, etc.)		25 points
o Hay and Pasture		12.5 "
o Mixed Woodlands, Abandoned Farms, Hobby Farms		5 "
o Woodlands		0 "
2) Size of Farm	(Maximum 15 points)	
o 200 + acres		15 points
o 150-199 acres		12.5 "
o 100-149 acres		10 "
o 50-99 acres		7.5 "
o 25-49 acres		5 "
o 10-24 acres		2.5 "
o 0-9 acres		0 "
3) Farmland Soils	(Maximum 30 points)	
a) Percent of Parcel in Prime Farmland Soils		
o 75-100%		25 "
o 50-74%		18 "
o 25-49%		12 "
o 10-24%		7 "
o 0-9%		2 "
b) Percent of Parcel in Soils of State and Local Importance		
o 75-100%		13 points
o 50-74%		9 "
o 25-49%		5 "
o 10-24%		3 "
o 0-9%		1 "
4) Collateral Environmental Objectives	(Maximum 12.5 points)	
o Adjacent to farmland or conservation land		5 points
o Within water supply of aquifer protection area		2.5 "
o Within FEMA 100-year floodplain		2.5 "
o Includes historical home or building		2.5 "
5) Total Weight/Priority for Preservation		
o High Priority		52-82.5 points
o Medium-High Priority		44-51.5 "
o Medium Priority		36-43.5 "
o Medium-Low Priority		30-35.5 "
o Low Priority		0-29 "

BELCHERTOWN FARMLAND MATRIX

PREPARED BY THE PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
26 CENTRAL STREET
WEST SPRINGFIELD, MA 01089
(410) 781-5045

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	SOILS LOCAL	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
JACKSON Charles and Elizabeth 734 GULF RD.	1A - B	MIXED	85.9	15%	33%	NONE			LOW
		5	7.5	7	5	0			24.5
WHITLOCK William and Muriel 181 NORTH ST	2	HAY	37.6	5%	50%	AQUIFER		HORSES CH. 61A	MED-LOW
		12.5	5	2	9	2.5			31
WALAS Henry and Irene 881 FEDERAL ST	3A - B	HAY	28	40%	50%	AQUIFER		LEASED PASTURE CH. 61A	MEDIUM
		12.5	5	12	9	2.5			41
LAND Edward 124 GULF RD	4A - B	HAY	20	7%	40%	AQUIFER		HORSE PASTURE CH. 61A	LOW
		12.5	2.5	2	5	2.5			24.5
LAND Edward 124 GULF RD	5	FOOD	15.1	15%	80%	AQUIFER		CORN HAY CH. 61A	MED-HIGH
		25	2.5	7	13	2.5			50
SEIDEL et.al Theresa PROVIDENCE, RI	6	HAY	26.7	95%	5%	AQUIFER FLOOD ADJACANT FARMLAND			HIGH
		12.5	5	25	1	10			53.5

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT SOILS STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
3 CAMPBELL Raymond and Lillian 100 ORCHARD	7A - C	FOOD	226	34%	22%	AQUIFER FLOOD ADJACENT FARMLAND	CRUACHAN ANGUS ORCHARD FARM	HIGH
		25	15	12	3	10		65
SUSSMAN David and Claire AMHERST, MA	8	HAY	51.6	25%	25%	AQUIFER FLOOD ADJACENT FARM	CH. 61A	MED-HIGH
		12.5	7.5	12	5	10		47
LAND Edward 124 GULF RD.	9	FOOD	15.1	10%		AQUIFER	ACTIVE ORCHARD CH. 61A	MEDIUM
		25	2.5	7	0	2.5		37
FOURNIER David E. RICHMOND, NH	10	FOOD	51.7	20%		ADJACENT FARMLAND	ACTIVE DAIRY PASTURE	MED-HIGH
		25	7.5	7		5		44.5
4 SHATTUCK William and Winifred 361 DANIEL SHAYS HWY.	11A - D	HAY	178.4	11%	50%	AQUIFER ADJACENT FARM FLOOD	APR APPLICANT CH. 61A	MED-HIGH
		12.5	12.5	7	9	10		51
FITZPATRICK Daniel and Junise 34 KAPEC AVE.	12	MIXED	11.2		10%	AQUIFER FLOOD ADJACENT		LOW
		5	2.5	0	3	10		20.5
HENRY Woodrow AMERHST, MA	13A & B	MIXED	80.7	5%	22%	FLOOD	HORSE FARM BOBBIN HOLLOW FARM	LOW
		5	7.5	2	3	2.5		20
SNOW Kenneth and Linda 33 FULLER STREET	14A & B	HAY		60%	8%	NONE	SNOW'S STORE LEASED TO HENRY	MED-LOW
		12.5		18	1	0		31.5

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT STATE AND LOCAL SOILS SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
FOURNIER David E. RICHMOND, NH	15	MIXED	31.1	75%		NONE		MED-LOW
		5	5	25	0	0		35
BEAUDOIN Lester 106 METACOMET ST.	16	FOOD	34.6	50%	45%	NONE	ACTIVE CORN, LEASED TO HIDE-AWAY FARM, AMHERST	HIGH
		25	5	18	5	0		53
MCCLURE Otto and Joan 541 N. WASHINGTON	17	FOOD	45.3	40%	25%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	TILLED SOLD FOR DEVELOPMENT	HIGH
		25	5	12	5	5		52
DUDA Joseph and Albina BONDSVILLE, MA	18	FOOD	35.8	40%	40%	HISTORIC ADJACENT	ORCHARD, CH 61A SOLD FOR DEVELOPMENT	HIGH
		25	5	12	5	7.5		54.5
	19	MIXED		30%	40%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN	HAY, ALFALFA CH. 61A	
		5		12	5	7.5		
STEPHENS Kirk GRANBY, MA	20A & B	FOOD	51.2	44%	28%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	BEEF COWS	HIGH
		25	7.5	12	5	5		54.5
GENOWEFA Thomas GRANBY, MA	21	HAY	40	30%	25%	ADJACENT FARMLAND		MEDIUM
		12.5	5	12	5	5		39.5
BELLROSE Louis and Bernice	22A - C	HAY	14.1	17%	63%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	CH. 61A	MEDIUM
		12.5	2.5	7	9	5		36

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT SOILS STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
BOJA Michael GRANBY, MA	23	MIXED	108.9	15%	30%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOOD		MED-LOW
		5	10	7	5	7.5		34.5
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS	24A & B	FOOD	91.7	35%	60%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOOD	SMALL FARM INST.	HIGH
		25	7.5	12	9	7.5		61
FERLAND Peter and Irene 39 UNDERWOOD	25	MIXED	30.5	40%	20%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOOD	CH. 61A SOLD FOR DEVELOPMENT	MED-LOW
		5	5	12	3	7.5		32.5
KNIGHT Richard and Barb GRANBY, MA	26	FOOD	25.8			FLOOD	BLUEBERRIES	MEDIUM
		25	5			2.5		32.5
RAE Thomas 291 STATE STREET	27	HAY	33.8	15%	30%	NONE	SCOTCH HIGHLANDERS	LOW
		12.5	5	7	5	0		29.5
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS	28	FOOD	411.6	7%	10%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN	SMALL FARM INST. STATE SCHOOL	HIGH
		25	15	2	3	7.5		52.5
BRIGHTENI Albert and Laura	29A & B	HAY	10.6	57%		AQUIFER	CH. 61A	MED-LOW
		12.5	2.5	18		2.5		35.5
GREENE Hubert and Jennie 51 WARE ROAD	30A & B	MIXED	115.1	21%	36%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER FLOOD	LEASED TO MADDEN	MEDIUM
		5	10	7	5	10		37

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT SOILS STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
5 SCHMIDT Edward and Eleanor 247 WARE ROAD	31	MIXED	29	10%	40%	AQUIFER ADJACENT		LOW
		5	5	7	5	7.5		29.5
5 SHELLENBERGER Terry and Susan 335 WARE ROAD	32	HAY	7.8		60%	ADJACENT FARMLAND		LOW
		12.5	0		9	5		26.5
6 ROSSI Anthony and Jeanette 391 SABIN STREET	34	FOOD	13.2		60%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	ORCHARD	MEDIUM
		25	2.5		9	5		41.5
HISLOP Kenneth J. 226 TURKEY HILL ROAD	35	MIXED	43.1	8%		NONE		LOW
		5	5	2		0		12
LOFTUS Francis and Emma 29 SPRINGFIELD ROAD	36A & B	FOOD	121	15%	25%	FLOOD	CORN, CH 61A SOLD FOR DEVELOPMENT	MED-HIGH
		25	10	7	5	2.5		49.5
1 RIEDEL Robert W. 92 MILL VALLEY ROAD	37	HAY	59.7	20%	10%	HISTORIC AQUIFER ADJACENT		MEDIUM
		12.5	7.5	7	3	10		40
8 FULLER Louis and Ruth 111 MILL VALLEY ROAD	38	HAY	16.2	20%	40%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	LEASED TO WENZEL	MED-LOW
		12.5	2.5	7	5	7.5		34.5
LABOSSIERE Leo and Patricia 224 MILL VALLEY ROAD	39	HAY	19		90%	AQUIFER		MED-LOW
		12.5	2.5		13	2.5		30.5

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT STATE AND LOCAL SOILS SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS	52	FOOD	30.1	SDIL	DATA	ADJACENT FARMLAND	STATE-OWNED ORCHARD	HIGH
		25	7.5	N/A		5		
ANDREWS Melvin and Ruby 50 BALDU STREET	53	HAY	24.7	30%	30%	NONE		MED-LOW
		12.5	2.5	12	5	0		32
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS	54A & B	MIXED	676.5	SOIL	DATA	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN	STATE-OWNED	MED-LOW
		5	15	N/A		7.5		
MADDEN Donald J. 324 TURKEY HILL ROAD	55	HAY	45.1	10%	20%	ADJACENT FARMLAND HISTORIC	CH. 61A	MEDIUM
		12.5	7.5	7	3	7.5		37.5
LECLERC George and Therese	56	MIXED	102.7		75%	ADJACENT FARMLAND		MED-LOW
		5	10		13	5		33
MACPHERSON Robert B. 366 TURKEY HILL ROAD	57	HAY	59.5	30%	10%	ADJACENT FARMLAND HISTORIC	CH. 61A	MEDIUM
		12.5	7.5	12	3	7.5		42.5
DANA Raymond and Veronica THREE RIVERS, MA	58	MIXED	55	5%	25%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN		LOW
		5	7.5	2	5	7.5		27
FORTIN Maurice and Priscilla 230 CHAUNCEY WALKER ST.	59	HAY	36.8		20%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN HISTORIC		MED-LOW
		12.5	5		3	10		30.5

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT SOILS STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
O'BRIEN Barbara	40	HAY	22.7	5%	10%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	CH. 61A	LOW
		12.5	2.5	2	3	5		25
KAVLAK All S. HADLEY	41	MIXED	79.9		5%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN		LOW
		5	7.5		1	7.5		21
ATKINS Howard	43 - 51	FOOD	282.2	3%	33%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	ORCHARD-APPLES, PEARS CH. 61A	HIGH
		25	15	2	5	5		52
BROWN Kenneth R. 330 N. WASHINGTON ST.	60	MIXED	14		65%	ADJACENT FARMLAND		LOW
		5	2.5		9	5		21.5
TETRAULT Hector and Edna 368 N. WASHINGTON ST.	61	FOOD	20.1	5%	65%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	BEEF	MEDIUM
		25	2.5	2	9	5		43.5
BUTLER Glen P. and Louise 419 CHAUNCEY WALKER ST.	62	FOOD	17.5		95%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	ORCHARD	MED-HIGH
		25	2.5		13	5		45.5
MARSHALL John A. and Flora S. 336 CHAUNCEY WALKER ST.	63	FOOD	159.0	10%	45%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN	ORCHARD-PEARS, PEARS CH. 61A	HIGH
		25	12.5	7	5	7.5		57
BOZINSKI Thaddeus and Alice	64	HAY	10.3		100%	AQUIFER	CH. 61A	MED-LOW
		12.5	2.5		13	2.5		30.5

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT SOILS STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
SHEA William P. BONDSVILLE, MA	65A - C	HAY	161.1	2%	40%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER		MEDIUM
		12.5	12.5	2	5	7.5		39.5
DONAHUE William H. BONDSVILLE, MA	66	HAY	51.7	10%	45%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER		MEDIUM
		12.5	7.5	7	5	7.5		39.5
PEASE Carl and Dorothy 36 KENNEDY ROAD	67	HAY	90	5%	70%	ADJACENT FARMLAND PRIMARY RECHARGE FLOODPLAIN	TILLED, DAIRY CH. 61A SOLD FOR DEVEL.	MEDIUM
		12.5	7.5	2	9	10		41
11 TROMBLEY William and Marie 89 MICHAEL SEARS ROAD	68A & B	HAY	76.6		70%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	TILLED CH. 61A	MEDIUM
		12.5	7.5		9	7.5		36.5
13 TROMBLEY Gerald and Carol 29B COLD SPRING ROAD	69	HAY	57	20%		ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	TILLED	MED-LOW
		12.5	7.5	7		7.5		34.5
12 ADZIMA Peter and Gloria 211 LUDLOW STREET	70A & B	HAY	97.2	7%	15%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN		MED-LOW
		12.5	7.5	2	3	7.5		30
ARCHAMBAULT Roger and Yvette	71	HAY	65.5	35%	35%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN		MEDIUM
		12.5	7.5	12	5	7.5		44.5
MINNEY Donald and Janet 51 LUDLOW STREET	72	HAY	10.54		100%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	CH. 61A	MED-LOW
		12.5	2.5		13	5		33

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT SOILS STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
LYNCH John Pierce SPRINGFIELD, MA	73	MIXED	34.1	15%	10%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN		LOW
		5	5	7	3	7.5		27.5
EURKUS Edward and Lois 606 N. WASHINGTON ST.	74	MIXED	63		15%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN		LOW
		5	7.5		3	7.5		23
DUDEK Sebaston E. 91 BARDWELL STREET	75A - E	FOOD	103.4		75%	ADJACENT FARMLAND HISTORIC	DAIRY	HIGH
		25	10		13	7.5		55.5
O'SHEEP Anne 245 COLD SPRING ROAD	76	MIXED	50		45	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	LEASED	LOW
		5	7.5		5	7.5		23
COOK Richard and Joan 621 CHAUNCEY WALKER ST.	77A & B	FOOD	63.5	6%	70%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	BEEF CH. 61A	MED-HIGH
		25	7.5	2	9	5		48.5
WOOD Elmer W. 61 S. WASHINGTON	78A & B	MIXED	77.3	5%	77%	ADJACENT FARMLAND		MEDIUM
		12.5	7.5	2	13	5		40
WENZEL Franklin 311 BARDWELL	79A - B	FOOD	101.4		45%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	DAIRY CH. 61A	MED-HIGH
		25	10		5	5		45
MARTINEAU Robert J. CHICOPEE, MA	81	FOOD	23.5		100%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	LEASED TO ALVA REIFF CORN	MED-HIGH
		25	2.5		13	7.5		48

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT SOILS STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
SHEA Robert and Edward FRANKLIN STREET	32	HAY	166.4	25%	55%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER FLOODPLAIN		HIGH 56
D'AGUIR Joseph and Belinda 231 MICHAEL GEAR ROAD	33	HAY	11.03			AQUIFER		LOW 17.5
SPELLMAN Maureen 121 S. WASHINGTON ST.	84A & B	HAY	74.4		60%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	PROMISE FARM ARABIAN CH. 61A	MED-LOW 34
JEJEIN Harry H. HOLYOKE, MA	85	FOOD	8.6		100%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	LEASED TO WENZEL CORN	MED-HIGH 45.5
FEFE Edward and June PORT ORANGE, FL	86A & B	FOOD	27.3	62%	8%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN	CORN LEASED TO REIFF	HIGH 56.5
ZITKA Hazel	87A & B	FOOD	91.8	20%	35%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER FLOODPLAIN	CORN CH. 61A	HIGH 54.5
SPELLMAN 491 N. LIBERTY STREET	89A - E	FOOD	111.9	8%	77%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN AQUIFER	CORN/PASTURE CH. 61A	HIGH 60
COLE Richard and Mildred	90A - C	FOOD	112		50%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	APR COLESHOLM FARM	MED-HIGH 51.5

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT SOILS STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
JODA Raymond and Charlotte BONDVILLE, MA	P1	MIXED	14.5		65%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	CH. 61A	LOW
		5	5		9	5		24
MC DANK Kerlin A. 455 MICHAEL BEARS ROAD	P2	FOOD	7.2		100%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	CORN CH. 61A	MED-HIGH
		25			10	7.5		45.5
MCBLAIN Gonla B. WATERTOWN, MA	P3	FOOD	18		75%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	CORN CH. 61A	MED-HIGH
		25	2.5		10	7.5		48
VONCHALSKI Joseph and Jeanne 601 FRANKLIN STREET	P4	FOOD	10.01		85%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	BEEF	MED-HIGH
		25	0.5		10	5		45.5
KERDACS Mary M. SPRINGFIELD, MA	P5A & B	HAY	35.8		96%	ADJACENT FARMLAND		MED-LOW
		10.5	5		10	5		38.5
KOE Edward and Gloria 144 SHEA AVENUE	P6	MIXED	10.86		60%	ADJACENT FARMLAND		LOW
		5	2.5		9	5		21.5
KERVACK Mary M. SPRINGFIELD, MA	P7	HAY	22.5		60%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN		MED-LOW
		10.5	2.5		9	7.5		31.5
AUSTON Joseph F. 170 WEST STREET	P8A - D	FOOD	145.2	14%	20%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	BATRY, CORN RE & SOLE FOR DEVELOPMENT	HIGH
		25	10	12	3	7.5		57.5

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT SOILS STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
OAK RIDGE FARMS, INC. 521 N. LIBERTY STREET	99A - E	FOOD	320.8	27%	23%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	DAIRY, CH 61A 99C - E SOLD FOR DEVEL.	HIGH 62.5
HILL Catherine FORT CHARLOTTE, FL	100	FOOD	46.3	50%	25%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	CORN	HIGH 60.5
RUSSELL John and Mary Jane 40 WEST STREET	101	HAY	35.46	20%	25%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER FLOODPLAIN 10		MEDIUM 39.5
PLONTKOWSKI Gary and Gina 54 PINE STREET	102	HAY	12.6		90%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER	HORGES	MED-LOW 35.5
OUDEK Stanley BOHOSVILLE, MA	103	MIXED	23.47	15%	20%	ADJACENT FARMLAND AQUIFER		LOW 25
KILPATRICK David and Edith 370 S. WASHINGTON STREE	105	FOOD	85.4	20%	20%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	CORN	MED-HIGH 47.5
KELLOGG Gary and Judith 391 S. WASHINGTON ST.	107A & B	HAY	11.4	25%		ADJACENT FARMLAND	CH. 61A	MED-LOW 30
STOKOSA Mary C. 20 MILLS ROAD	110A & B	HAY	96.6	21%	20%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	LEASED CH. 61A	MED-LOW 35

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT SOILS STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
LYSIK Stanley and Nellie 540 S. WASHINGTON ST.	111A & B	HAY	32.14	30%	40%	ADJACENT FARMLAND		MEDIUM
		12.5	5	12	5	5		39.5
BLIMA Matthew and Theresa ACTON, MA 01720	113	FOOD	16.2	20%	70%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	CORN	MED-HIGH
		25	2.5	7	9	5		48.5
PAINE Merrill and Mary LUDLOW, MA	114A & B	FOOD	38.3	50%	5%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	CORN CH. 61A	HIGH
		25	5	18	1	5		54
FONTAINE Louis and Josephine 627 S. WASHINGTON ST.	115A & B	HAY	19	15%		ADJACENT FARMLAND		LOW
		12.5	2.5	7		5		27
SULLIVAN (et al) Lucy 440 SOUTH STREET	116	FOOD	40	15%	45%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	DAIRY, CH. 61A LEASED TO RIEFF	MED-HIGH
		25	5	7	5	5		47
SULLIVAN Cornelius 440 SOUTH STREET	117	FOOD	112.1	30%	5%	ADJACENT FARMLAND FLOODPLAIN	CORN, CH. 61A LEASED	HIGH
		25	10	12	1	7.5		55.5
KRAWIEC John and Margaret SPRINGFIELD, MA	119A & B	MIXED	11.5	2%	72%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	APPLES	
			2.5	2	9	5		
HAMEL Kenneth and Nancy 248 SOUTH STREET	120A & B	HAY	14.7	93%	3%	ADJACENT FARMLAND	CH. 61A	MED-HIGH
		12.5	2	25	1	5		46

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT SOILS STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
DOBIEK Edward and Sophie 650 S. WASHINGTON STREET	121	FOOD	15.6 2.5	50% 18		ADJACENT FARMLAND HISTORIC 7.5		
PAINE Merrill and Jonathan LUDLOW, MA	122A & B	FOOD	40.22 25	58% 18	21% 3	ADJACENT FARMLAND 5	DAIRY	HIGH 56
BELISLE Francis and Dorothy	123	FOOD	21.8 25		30% 5	ADJACENT FARMLAND 5	TILLED HERBS CH. 61A	MEDIUM 37.5
BOULERICE Albert R. 441 SOUTH STREET	124	FOOD	63.4 25		15% 3	ADJACENT FARMLAND 5	DAIRY, CH. 61A WHOLE HERD BUYOUT BID, APR APPLICANT	MEDIUM 37.5
BOKLER Roger	125	FOOD	33.4 25	40% 12	35% 5	ADJACENT FARMLAND 5	CORN	HIGH 52
SOCHA Stephen and Sophie 227 S. LIBERTY STREET	126	FOOD	57.2 25	45% 12	45% 5	ADJACENT FARMLAND 5	LEASED TO RIEFF	HIGH 52.5
BROWN Erwyn L. 95 RAILROAD STREET	127	HAY	35.4 12.5	100% 25		FLOODPLAIN 2.5		MED-HIGH 45
CHUDY John S. 270 S. LIBERTY STREET	128	HAY	46.2 12.5	55% 18	5% 1	ADJACENT FARMLAND 5		MEDIUM 41.5

OWNER/RENTER ADDRESS	MAP AND PARCEL NUMBERS	LAND USE	TOTAL ACRES	PERCENT PRIME SOILS	PERCENT SOILS STATE AND LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE	COLLATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES	COMMENTS	PRIORITY WEIGHT
17 CZUPRYNA Stanley 294 SOUTH LIBERTY STREET	130	MIXED	24.94	30%	35%	ADJACENT FARMLAND		LOW
		5	5	7	5	5		27
17 JUSKO Minnie 289 S. LIBERTY STREET	131	FOOD	10.3	60%		ADJACENT FARMLAND	CORN	MED-HIGH
		25	2.5	18		5		50.5

APPENDIX B

AGRICULTURAL INCENTIVE AREA PETITION



PETITION TO BELCHERTOWN BOARD OF SELECTMEN

We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Belchertown Board of Selectmen to establish an agricultural incentive area committee pursuant to the Massachusetts Right-to-Farm Law, Chapter 613 of the Acts of 1985.

As provided by state law, the Board of Selectmen may appoint a committee which "shall consist of seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen" and "shall include one member of the Board of Selectmen, one member of the Planning Board, one member of the Conservation Commission, three residents of the municipality whose principal occupation is agriculture or horticulture and one person from the public at large."

The responsibilities of this committee should include:

- 1) To map all land in agricultural or horticultural use within the town, indicating soils, property boundaries, ownership, and present zoning.
- 2) To inform the public and all affected landowners of the purposes and requirements of agricultural incentive areas, using printed information and public meetings.
- 3) To make recommendations regarding the formation of an agricultural incentive area, provided that no land may be included in the incentive area unless the owner of the land has given prior written approval.
- 4) To hold a public hearing on the agricultural incentive area plan, and following the hearing, to vote to accept or reject the plan.
- 5) If the plan is adopted, to submit the plan to the Commissioner of food and agriculture for certification.
- 6) To submit the certified plan to the Board of Selectmen. Approval of the plan requires a two-thirds majority vote of town meeting.

As provided by state law, participation in the agricultural incentive area is voluntary. Landowners who give written approval to participate in an agricultural incentive area are eligible for incentives including:

1. Priority eligibility for the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program;
2. Protection from nuisance actions related to farm odors, noise and other farming practices;
3. Reduced property taxes as provided by Chapter 61a;
4. Protection from special or betterment assessments imposed by the community.

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

APPENDIX C

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ZONING BYLAW

TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN

1.0 AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION DISTRICT

1.00 Purpose

The purposes of the Agricultural Preservation District are to:

- a. Protect prime agricultural lands for future food production;
- b. Maintain an adequate agricultural land base in Belchertown to ensure continued economic viability for local agriculture and the availability of agricultural support services;
- c. Prevent excessive public service and infrastructure costs which would result from unplanned urban growth in areas more appropriate for agriculture;
- d. Preserve scenic, historic and other farming-related values which help define the character of Belchertown's culture and landscape;
- e. Promote and protect the practice of farming in Belchertown.

1.01. District Delineation

The Agricultural Preservation District is defined as all lands designated on the map entitled "Agricultural Preservation District, Town of Belchertown", on file with the Town Clerk. All lands included in the district shall be included only upon written approval of the property owner.

1.02 Permitted Uses

- a. Agricultural production, including raising of crops, livestock, poultry, nurseries, orchards, hay;
- b. Normal agricultural practices, including but not limited to manure storage, farm machine operation and fertilizer and pesticide use as regulated by state and federal law;
- c. Uses accessory to farm operations, including greenhouses, farm animal veterinary facilities, agricultural processing and storage facilities;
- d. Farm-related dwelling units;
- e. Single-family homes on frontage lots not requiring approval under the Massachusetts Subdivision Control Law, M.G.L. Chapter 41, which comply with the Site Design standards in Section 1.07 of this bylaw.

1.03 Uses Permitted With Site Plan Review

All residential subdivisions which require approval under M.G.L., Chapter 41, shall be laid out in accordance with the Agricultural Land and Development Standards in Section 1.06 and the Site Design Standards in Section 4.27 of this bylaw, and shall require Site Plan Approval from the Planning Board. All applicants for Site Plan Approval shall comply with Section _____ of this bylaw.

1.04 Additional Requirements for Site Plan Approval

The applicant shall comply with the minimum requirements for site plan contents in Section _____ of this bylaw, and shall also submit to the Planning Board the following information:

- a. Description of illustration of the physical characteristics within and adjacent to this site, including: prime agricultural soils, soils of state and local importance, other soils and soil characteristics, areas used for crop or other agricultural production.
- b. Description of compliance with Agricultural Land and Development Standards in Section 1.06 and Site Design Standards in Section 1.07.

1.05 Criteria for Review

In addition to the criterion contained in Section 6.35, the Planning Board shall also consider the following criteria:

- a. is in compliance with Agricultural Land and Development Standards;
- b. will not interfere with farming operations on adjacent lands;
- c. is situated on the portion of the site with soils least suitable for the production of crops or livestock;
- d. is integrated into the existing landscape through features such as vegetative buffers, and through retention of open agricultural land.

1.06 Agricultural Land and Development Standards

- a. Residential subdivision developments in the Agricultural Preservation District shall be laid out according to the Open Space Community standards set forth in Section _____ of this bylaw. All buildings and roads shall be located away from soils which are most suitable for agriculture (based on U.S. Soil Conservation Service classifications for prime farmland soils and soils of state and local importance) to the maximum practical extent. This provision does not apply to the location of on-site septic disposal facilities which must be placed in soils meeting the Massachusetts Environmental Code.

- b. The maximum number of dwelling units permitted in an open space community in the Agricultural Preservation District shall be calculated based upon one unit per acre for the net acreage remaining once the area of all wetlands identified by the Conservation Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L., Chapter 131, Section 40, have been subtracted from the total acreage of the property.
- c. At least fifty (50) percent of the net acreage remaining after the area of all wetlands has been subtracted shall be retained as open agricultural land. Remaining open agricultural land shall have appropriate acreage, configuration and access to enable continued farming operations.
- d. All roads, drainage systems and utilities shall be laid out in a manner so as to have the least possible impact on agricultural lands and uses.

1.07 Site Design Standards

All residences developed either on frontage lots or within an open space community shall comply with the following standards:

- a. All buildings, homes and structures shall be located a minimum of 100 feet from agricultural land and shall be separated by a 50-foot wide buffer strip of trees and fencing sufficient to minimize conflicts between farming operations and residences.
- b. Each structure shall be integrated into the existing landscape on the property so as to minimize its visual impact and maintain visibility of adjacent agricultural lands from public ways through use of vegetative and structural screening, landscaping, grading and placement on or into the surface of the lot.

1.08 Protection of Open Agricultural Land

The following standards shall apply to open agricultural land to be protected as part of the development of an open space community:

- a. Farmland owners are not required to sell the part of their property which is to become permanent agricultural open space, provided that they do convey the development rights of that open space in a conservation easement prohibiting future development of this property to any of the official bodies named in Section 1.08 (b) below.
- b. All remaining open agricultural land shall be permanently protected by either:

1. A permanent conservation easement or deed restriction conveyed to the Town of Belchertown with Town approval or to a non-profit farmland trust or conservation organization whose principal purpose is to conserve farmland and open space. At a minimum, such an easement or restriction shall entail the use of management practices that ensure existing fields or pastures will be plowed or mowed at least once every year.
2. Ownership in fee simple conveyed to the Town of Belchertown with Town approval or to a non-profit farm trust, open space or conservation organization as a gift or for a consideration.

APPENDIX D

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE



Plan devised to preserve Belchertown farms

By GRANT MacKAY

BELCHERTOWN — A plan to protect farms from the onslaught of real estate development was submitted to the Belchertown selectmen last night.

Christopher Curtis, a planner for the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, said the plan took more than a year to complete, and was developed with the participation of local farmers and residents.

Dan and Janet Minney, farm owners on Ludlow Road, also submitted a petition to the selectmen, signed by 28 Belchertown farmers and calling for the creation of an "agricultural incentive area committee."

The committee would include town officials, farmers and residents and would investigate the creation of an agricultural incentive area that would help farmers preserve their land.

Dan Minney said farmers have been under pressure to capitulate to developers. He said it has been frustrating to him because he thinks farmers are a minority without any base of support.

"Let it be known that we want something to be done for a change, instead of just being quiet," he said.

The farm plan, called the Belchertown Farmland Preservation Plan, was commissioned by the selectmen last year and was partially funded by the Massachusetts Society for the Promotion of Agriculture.

include:

- establishing an agricultural incentive area so that farmers can obtain real estate tax breaks, protection against nuisance suits, and other incentives to stay in the business of farming. A Town Meeting vote would be required;

- creating an agricultural zone that would limit the type and density of development. This measure also would require a Town Meeting vote;

- purchasing development rights; some \$45 million has been spent by the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture's Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program. Through this program, the state has purchased development rights on more than 20,000 acres statewide;

- limiting water and sewer line

development into undeveloped farmland areas;

- providing additional police protection to help prevent incidents of vandalism. Curtis said one farmer's entire corn crop was destroyed when somebody romped over the field with a four-wheel, all-terrain vehicle.

The selectmen took the plan and the residents' petition under advisement for consideration by the full board. Board members Herbert Squires and Shirley Aldrich both were absent.

Curtis said that in addition to providing jobs for the area economy, farms also provide environmental functions such as retention of water for recharge into water supplies. However, farmers are under enormous pressure from developers to sell off their land, he said.

"Since the Belchertown farmland preservation planning effort was initiated in 1986, seven farmland owners have sold nine parcels for development, totaling approximately 584 acres," Curtis said.

A total of 150 parcels owned by 110 farmers, comprising 7,181 acres, were identified by the plan's land survey. Of these, 3,421 acres are used for food production, 1,965 are used for hay or pasturing, and 1,794 acres are made up of abandoned or family farms, according to Curtis.

The community value of the land was prioritized using criteria that included quality of soil, type of farm, size of farm and environmental objectives.

Curtis said the plan recommends specific initiatives to deal with the problem. He said that 39 farmers were surveyed to see if any of the initiatives had support in the farming community.

"All of the steps we are recommending to preserve the farmland are voluntary. The individual farmer can choose whether or not he wants to participate in each step," Curtis said. The recommendations

Gazette

'Preserve Farm Lands' Report To Selectmen

By Michele Deschaine

BELCHERTOWN — A Farmland Preservation Plan designed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission geared to giving direct action recommendation on the preservation of the 7,181 acres of farmland in Belchertown was presented to the Board of Selectmen at their Monday night meeting.

Chris Curtis, a representative from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) told the board that the process of the preservation plan began one year ago on a large scale basis, but eventually evolved into a small working group of six individuals who served as a "sound-ing board" for the farmers in the area.

He said the plans include a survey of farmers and farm owners that responded to questions on a voluntary basis the PVPC presented to them at the beginning of the plans process.

Curtis also told the board the plan also included farming resources, trends on land uses, reported and documented land changes and their reasons.

Farmers' Attitude; 'Very Strong'

"The attitude, (Belchertown) farmers have on farm land and its preservation is very strong," Curtis said.

Curtis said 150 farm parcels and 110 farm owners were included on the maps designed in the preservation plan

presented to the board in a neatly bound pamphlet.

Curtis explained to the board that out of the 7,181 farming acres of land mapped and put into the plans matrix, 3,421 acres of land fall under the active food category, which includes, dairy poultry, fruits and vegetables. "1,965 acres includes pastures," he said, and 1,794 acres falls under the category of mixed woodlands or "hobby farms."

Seven Recommendations

A total of seven recommendations made up the recom-mendation section of the preservation plan, Curtis said, "and these were based on a survey distributed to Belcher-town farmers."

The first recommendation, he said, asked to establish an agricultural maintenance area, which he said can be done through the state's existing legislature.

The second recommendation, Curtis said, was the idea of adopting an innovative zoning district. "A model zoning by-law is also included with this recommendation," he said.

The third recommendation was the commitment of local funds for agricultural reserve purchases. "The state has already spent \$45 million on an (agricultural preser-

See Page 2

Page 2 — The Sentinel — Wednesday, July 29-August 4, 1987

Farm Lands

From Page 1

vation) program," Curtis said, "and they are still seeking \$30 million to make this program strong."

The fourth recommendtion asked that the town establish a policy on water and sewer line extensions into farm-land districts "so that developers will have no incentive on developing that certain region," Curtis explained.

Innovative Trust-Fund

Item five recommended that farmlands join with exist-ing land on a trust or fund. "This is an innovative idea," Curtis said, "because (farmers) would use money from Chapter 61 Robuck taxes, which he explained is when land is withdrawn a town can set aside that money and use it for preservation purposes instead of town uses. This, he said, would require a vote at a town meeting and an annual vote of the Board of Selectmen.

Recommendation number six asked that an education program be established in the school system to teach stu-dents to respect farmers and their land, the history of

farms in Belchertown and the rights of farmers.

The final recommendation that stemmed from the survey of farmers asked that the town provide and im-prove police protection to farms that have had vandalism.

Damage To Farms

"One farm in town," Curtis said, "had its entire barn dismantled and another farm had a whole crop destroyed by a four-wheel-drive vehicle."

"There is some serious damage being done to our farms," he said, "and the town needs to give some help."

The selectmen, after listening intently to Curtis speak on the preservation plan said they would take the plan under consideration and "act on the recommendations in the near future," Selectman Bernard Kubiak said.

"We are very happy to hear all of the farmers recom-mendations," Kubiak said, "And we are happy to hear you have put together a good, strong report."

"The planning commission won't stop here," Curtis assured the board, "We want ideas and are ready to help in any way possible. That is part of our goal from our standpoint."

Saving Our Farmlands Vital Trust

Woody Guthrie, in his classic folk anthem, "This Land Is Your Land," celebrates the powerful bond which exists between the American people and the land on which we work and live.

Massachusetts farmers well understand the truth of Guthrie's words. For generations, they have struggled to spare their precious farmland from the poorly planned checkerboard and strip developments which have marred the Massachusetts landscape. Against great odds, these farmers are determined to hold on to our state's rich agricultural heritage.

Their concern is justified. From more than two million acres farmed in 1945, Massachusetts now is down to just over 600,000 acres. That's nearly one-and-a-half million acres of valuable farmland which have been sacrificed forever to industrial parks, condominiums, residential developments and shopping malls.

While factories and houses and malls certainly are a necessary part of our lives today, there's no reason that they have to be built on prime agricultural soils and beautiful open spaces. With a little creative planning, we can have our farms and our condos, too. We can resist the temptation to sell out our farmers in the name of progress.

Just ask Sunderland dairy farmer Jim Williams Sr., whose family has been harvesting crops and raising cattle on the Mount Toby Farm in this exquisite Pioneer Valley town for more than 200 years. Though his family technically owns the property, Williams prefers to think of himself as the steward of that soil — and not its sole proprietor.

"I think everybody owns the land, and we don't have the right to destroy it," says Williams. "It's really a crime to see one person who owns a lot of land put buildings on it and destroy it forever. Forever is a long time."

Williams knows about forever. Mount Toby Farm recently became one of 170 Massachusetts farms — representing some 17,000 acres of farmland — which will stay

in farming forever under the state's Agricultural Preservation Restriction program.

By the end of this year, using all of the remaining funds in the program, a total of some 212 farms and 21,000 acres of farmland will have been saved.

To keep this important program running, however, additional funds are desperately needed. Pending before the Legislature is a bill that would add \$15 million to the \$45 million which has been spent on the program since it started eight years ago.

MAILBOX

Letters must be brief, legible, and written on only one side of the paper. All letters MUST have the name and address of the writer and should be signed. Pen names are used occasionally, but then only at the discretion of the editor.

With the new funding, the state will be able to continue purchasing development rights to some of the most valuable Massachusetts farms.

Farmers, environmentalists, lawmakers and others are working together in hopes of securing those necessary dollars. But general public support is needed, too, if the farmland protection effort is to survive. Clearly, it's in the interest of everyone — not just farmers — to see the program continue.

Massachusetts family farms keep thousands of acres of land carefully cultivated, supplying our supermarkets and restaurants with fresh, high-quality, low-chemical food. The rising popularity of roadside stands, farmers' markets and pick-your-owns points to an enormous consumer demand for food that is fresher, safer, and closer.

And Massachusetts family farmers are just as important as the fields they sow. They are active citizens of our communities, often serving on boards of selectmen, conservation commissions, planning boards, and other governmental bodies.

To let our farmland slip away unnoticed, therefore, would be to unravel the very fabric of our Massachusetts heritage. We would be denying ourselves many of the taken-for-granted benefits which make Massachusetts so livable.

That's not to say that we will ever be able to retrieve what already has been lost, or completely prevent any future erosion of our farmland. We can't buy back the state. We can't expect to compete with the developer's big dollars.

But we can do our best.

As the state's farmland protection program has evolved, so have newer and more creative approaches to stretching the state's dollars. Many cities and towns are drafting creative zoning laws and contributing matching funds to the program.

Private groups such as the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Kestrel Trust, the American Farmland Trust, the Trust for Public Lands and former Food and Agriculture Commissioner Fred Winthrop's Trustees of Reservations also are heavily involved in the effort to rescue our farmland.

Only through the combined resourcefulness of the state and its people can Massachusetts continue to build a program which offers such vast public benefits at a relatively low cost to taxpayers.

Woody Guthrie saw it so clearly. This land is our land, he reminded us. It's our land to enjoy and respect. It's our land to save for ourselves and future generations. No one else is going to do it for us.

AUGUST SCHUMACHER JR.
Commissioner
Mass. Department of
Food and Agriculture

Cambridge Street,
Boston.

Daily News 11-17-86

Selectmen Support Agriculture Study

SPRINGFIELD DAILY NEWS

By YVONNE G. PESCE

BELCHERTOWN — Selectmen will seek \$2,150 to join a Pioneer Valley Regional Planning Commission study of agriculture despite its rejection by the Planning Board, Selectman Chairman Bernard Kubiak says.

Chairman Helen Gibson said Thursday the board voted 3-2 not to join the regional project because, "mainly we don't know what we're getting."

The board prefers to increase efforts to hire a full-time planner to develop strategies for farmland preservation. But that effort has stalled since Town Meeting voters only approved half, or \$10,000, of the planner's salary, forcing the town to seek government funding for the rest, she said.

Executive Secretary William G. Whitlock has been working to secure grant funds for a planner, but if none is available by January, the Planning Board will hire someone at \$10,000 for the remainder of the fiscal year, she said. "And at the next town meeting we'll ask for full funding."

Wary of Intervention

Gibson said board members also were wary of intervention by the Pioneer Valley Regional Planning Commission. "It's a group from out of town. They're a regional commission. But if we had a full-time planner, we wouldn't need the Pioneer Valley Commission," she said.

The project's pricetag would put a big dent in the Planning Board's fiscal year budget of \$7,000 for wages and expenses without a clear purpose, Gibson said.

"What kind of work can you get for \$2,000?" she asked. "I think \$2,000 would be better invested than in this."

Gibson said she told Selectman Joanne Newman the day before Tuesday's vote that the board would support the project, but she misjudged her colleague's sentiments.

New Committee Formed

The new Controlled Growth Study Committee also will work on agricultural issues. Two members — Elizabeth Coxon and Beth Spencer — were appointed to the group Tuesday and selectmen will appoint three more people.

Annual Town Meeting voters approved a one-year moratorium on subdivision construction in land zoned agricultural, and approved

formation of the committee to review land uses.

At the selectman's meeting Monday, PVPC Executive Director Timothy Brennan said the project had received a \$6,000 grant from a private foundation and was targeted at Belchertown, Amherst and Southampton. Each community would contribute \$2,000 and the planning commission would provide an experienced staff person to work with local officials on developing new techniques to preserve agricultural land.

But Selectmen Shirley Aldrich and Herbert Squires wanted to know the Planning Board's reaction before approving the \$2,000 for the study.

7-26-85

